

**Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission
Education of Military Dependents Task Force
Task Force Meeting DRAFT Minutes
February 2, 2006**

Members in Attendance: Kent D. Thomas, Chair; Dana Cass; Dr. Judene Blackburn; Judy Castro; Rachel Wheeler; Ronald L. Taylor; Representative David Pearce; Senator Frank Barnitz; Sharon Gulick

Task Force Meeting:

Mr. Thomas opened the meeting by thanking all of the members for agreeing to serve and asked them to introduce themselves.

He then provided a brief history on the development of the task force and outlined the task force's objectives.

Goal for today's meeting is to establish common ground and outline what we will try to accomplish. Determine if we have issues to resolve and then find ways to accomplish that. Hopefully we can accomplish this through local response rather than legislative action.

Student athletes

WAFB has addressed this issue by requiring the student athlete or cheerleader to go through another try out and assesses the athlete's ability to play the sport without injury. Dr. Blackburn said that Waynesville does much the same thing. Goal is to ensure that the student has the opportunity to participate. Mrs. Castro said that in her experience some school districts hold open 1 or 2 slots on teams to allow space for transitioning students to try out for an open spot on the teams, while others fill all of the slots and leave no opportunity for students coming into the district.

Question was raised if this was a school district rule or Missouri Student Athletic Association rule. Could rule be modified to allow exceptions for military dependent students and foreign exchange students to allow them to participate in the sport? Ms. Gulick will contact the Association to determine what the rules are and how the rules may apply to military dependent students.

Mr. Thomas asked that Ms. Wheeler and Mrs. Castro make some low-keyed inquiries to determine if transitioning student's ability to play sports is a problem in their districts.

Rep. Pearce said that another issue is that some of the military families are required to live in certain locations and the school district may not offer certain sports or opportunities for the student. Some discussion had been held in the area to allow the student to attend another school district in the area that offered the desired sport or opportunity. Consensus was that this would not be an issue that the Task Force wanted to promote at this time.

The members then review each of the Dept. of Defense issues:

Incompatible graduation requirements:

Issue: Graduation requirements vary from state to state. In some states, specific courses are required for graduation. The graduation of military students who transfer during their junior or senior year may be jeopardized if they are unable, due to regulations or scheduling constraints to enroll in the necessary coursework. A common problem is the state history course.

Requirement to take the Missouri state history even though he/she had already taken a state history test in another state or transferred from a DOD school overseas and had taken a history course. Some students are being required to take state history tests in multiple states. Mrs. Castro said that the preferred resolution would be to allow a state history test taken in any state or DOD U.S. history test to count toward graduation requirements rather than requiring the students to take state history in many states.

Dr. Blackburn said agreed that this is a problem and suggested that the section in state law (170.011) be waived for students that register after completion of their junior year. Additionally, any transfer student that has successfully a state history course offered in any accredited high school or educational program in any state would satisfy the requirements of subsection 3.

This would require legislative action. It was also suggested that House or Senate Research look at how other states have addressed this issue.

Course Content and Sequencing

Issue: state have varying prerequisite course requirements that can result in thwarting students' academic advancement, repeating content or eliminating students from Advanced Placement courses.

Consensus that this was a local issue best dealt with by the superintendent, school counselor and parents.

Transfer of Records

Issue: Official transcripts for military-affiliated children often come from other state or overseas schools. Children are placed incorrectly because some schools refuse to accept hand-carried copies until the official version arrives. Because of the possible time lapse between entry into school and the arrival of school records, this process jeopardizes proper placement for all students, in particular, those involved in Special Education, Gifted Education, English as a Second Language, and Advanced Placement.

Does not appear to be an issue in Missouri.

Redundant/Missed Entrance and Exit Testing

Issue: Children who move frequently can be penalized for missing state mandated tests required to enter or exit various levels of the educational system. Tests are

often specific to the state and therefore, entrance/exit tests take in another state are not recognized. Other students spent valuable classroom instruction time testing in one state only to repeat similar, extensive testing in the next state. Redundant and missed entrance and exit testing can result in a child being over-tested, placed incorrectly, or denied advancement.

Does not appear to be an issue in Missouri.

Kindergarten and First Grade entrance age variances

Rep. Pearce (HB1398) and Sen. Barnitz (SB898) have filed legislation that allows students that have completed a pre-K program or kindergarten in another state, the student automatically moves to the next grade, regardless of the student's age.

Other issues:

Military children in the public school system gifted program are sometimes required to be re-tested when they move from state to state. In other cases they are told they don't qualify for the program even though they had been in a gifted program at the previous school. Dr. Blackburn and Ms. Cass will check on the policy in their school district and report back at the March meeting.

After school programs and activities in elementary schools. Some of the programs are so engrained that they are reluctant to take in new students after the program begins. Ms. Cass said that she knew that many of the programs have a limit on the number of students that can participate and/or have a waiting list. Ms. Cass and Dr. Blackburn will check on the policy in their districts.

Foreign language not considered as a fine arts credit in Missouri. In many other states foreign language is considered a fine art. Recommendation is to have foreign language courses be considered as a fine art. Would need to petition the Missouri State School Board to change this requirement. Ms. Gulick will contact the Board to determine why foreign language is not considered a fine art and what would be involved in making this change.

News Release

Members requested that a news release be done that reviewed the work of the task force and encourage individuals who have issues for the task force to address to send those comments to MMPEC@ded.mo.gov no later than February 28th.

Next Meeting

March 2nd, 1 p.m. Room 720 Harry S Truman Building, Jefferson City

Minutes Approved:

3 March 2006